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**BOOK REVIEW 2:
SOCIAL ANALYSIS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY:
HOW FAITH BECOMES ACTION, MARIA CIMPERMAN**



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Cimperman said that she is writing this book to present the essential tools of social analysis; she focuses on four specific cases studies:1- Immigration, 2- Homeless, 3- Environment, and 4- HIV/AIDS. This book is about hope and a way of hope for the world. She anchors her thoughts around the following question: What do you see? What do you hear? What are other people seeing and hearing? What are the unmet needs in the world today? What needs to be done? This book fills the ongoing need for the tools of social analysis.

In the social analysis, Cimperman uses the plastic bag project case study. The consumer was now connected to the grocery store owner, the city, the church, plastic distributors, and so on. She emphasizes building network relationships at each level, no matter which organizing method. Cimperman suggests keeping two key mantras in mind as you work on lists, connections, and information gathering. First, keep it manageable. The second mantra is: Together, we can. A group should divvy up the areas of analysis.

In the Economic analysis, Cimperman states that the Economic analysis looks at the organization of resources and seeks to understand and find the links between the organization of resources and the issue to be addressed in our case study with the plastic bag company. There are a few questions Cimperman suggests on economic analysis. Is the company open to alternative manufacturing products? Does the company recycle bags, use recycled materials, or perform research on biodegradable bags? What might they imagine that would help sustain their business and be better for the environment? Is the company local, regional, national, or international? The answers will indicate how relationships, educational efforts, and systems might be used.

In the political analysis, Cimperman looks at the organization of power and politics and asks questions such as What political structures are active in this situation? Who has power? What kind of power? What power does each major player have? What power dynamics are at play here? How are they related to each other? How are they related to you? What legislation, if any, concerns this issue? What lobbying groups are involved, and with whom and on behalf of whom? What is the role of social media on this topic in terms of political analysis?

In Cultural analysis, Cimperman looks at various structures that determine how a society organizes meaning. Culture shapes how we look at issues, how we discuss issues, and which cultural lens we choose or prioritize in making decisions about issues. Overt as well as more subtle cultures form us. Family is the first culture that formed most of us. We have a way of looking at the world through the lens of our family. Cimperman frames her cultural analysis around the following questions: What are the cultural structures and dynamics at work? What cultural values and practices influence our thinking and acting? How does culture express meaning or value in this issue? How does culture frame the issues? Which cultures play a prominent role?

In the environmental analysis, she highlights the relationship between the parish, the community, and the plastic bag company through a set of questions. Do people know what happens to the bags after their use? Do people recycle their bags? Do people know about alternatives to plastic bags? What would it take to get people to choose reusable bags? Parish and other community groups can also connect or partner with environmental groups that can supply resources and advocate for environmentally friendly positions.

Finally, in the religious analysis, she quotes James Hug reminding us that religion and religious traditions also participate in the social issues of the day, and we must responsibly assess religion's role, capacity, and responsibility on social justice issues.

In the theological implementation approach and practice, Cimperman argues that three significant gaps are access to resources, power, and opportunities. Essential resources include significant areas of food, water, and shelter. These are primary resources for survival—not thriving but just surviving. Cimperman highlights that Flexibility is also needed in planning action, as action and implementation require a continual willingness to adapt to changing situations and the signs of the times. Cimperman introduced 21 worksheets to facilitate the integration and implementation of social transformation.

1- Immigration, Cimperman highlights that *the widespread desire in the United States for immigration reform has real implications for this industry; the industry thus seeks to influence agribusiness companies, lawmakers, and the public.*

2- Homeless: Every state has different definitions of homelessness and different processes for dealing with it. The state supports for people experiencing homelessness is weak, and most victims regard shelters as a last resort. Cimperman quickly realized that various cultures and cultural traditions approach people experiencing homelessness differently; therefore, she uses her cultural analysis to know the best way to reach out to the community.

3- Environment: Cimperman states that most issues impact the environment and vice versa, even if only indirectly. With environmental issues, see whether you are trying to stop an injustice (illegal logging) or create something new (protect a freshwater source or create safe-use

policies). In environmental analysis, Cimperman challenges us to change environmental structures to achieve a vision that more closely reflects our faith values.

4- HIV/AIDS. Cimperman research and subsequent efforts in HIV and AIDS resulted from stories bolstered by statistics. She spent a summer in Ghana, West Africa, listening to a woman dying of AIDS share her story, and she began to focus her research topic on AIDS. She realized that a better response to the disease was needed than billboard signs warning about the ways HIV is spread, and she dove into intensive research about HIV and AIDS. Cimperman uses narrative and data as a tool. She highlights that: *Narratives move our hearts, which also can move us to act. Humans have natural compassion that moves us to respond to the suffering of others, which in part is what compels us to donate when we see and hear people dealing in distress.*

Practically, stories move our hearts while data move our heads, ultimately asking for an integrated response to God's people living with or at risk of HIV and AIDS. In addition, stories and personal connections can keep.

For the implementation, I will focus on Cimperman's question for further analysis before initiating such project in my community. As a Christian leader, I will focus on the religious action, creation, and organizing questions provided in the work section.

Guiding questions:

- What role does religion play in our short-term plan? In our long-term plan?
- How is religion connected to the systemic change you seek to bring about?
- What faith values need to impact religious structures?
- Is there a particular form of action that flows from our group

Creating questions

- What kind of system would you create if there were a blank slate for religious factors?
- How would you change the current religious structures to achieve a vision that more closely reflects your faith values?

Organizing questions

- Who is needed for this group?
- What skills are needed?
- Who has expertise? What actors are still needed?

In conclusion Cimperman expect us to experience some challenge: *“Failure is your friend and teacher. We are taught early on in life that failure is bad and reflects poorly on us as persons and our abilities. No one is a failure. However, a wise person takes sufficient risks and tries new ideas even if some or many fail in whole or in part. The wise person has a more extended vision and sees that each effort is a piece of the movement that gets you closer to your goal.”*

A common point in each of the stories in the book is that readers are learning from them. In each of these stories people became more alive to not just the issues but to the people who experienced their negative effects and suffered from them:(Immigration, Homeless, Environment, and HIV/AIDS)” How can I be a peacemaker in this situation? How can I give a cup of water” (Matt. 25)?

Biography:

Cimperman, Maria. Social Analysis for the 21st Century. Orbis Books. Kindle Edition.